

Application No: 10/519,852
Amendment E
Reply to Office Action Dated 11/26/2007

Attorney Docket No: 3883.022

REMARKS

Claims 1-2 and 6-7 are pending in the application. Claim 1 has been amended. Claims 3-5 have been previously cancelled.

Claims Rejections – 35 USC 102/103

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Frand et al. (US 3,457,739) (hereinafter Frand).

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Getaz (US 2,821,847).

Claims 1 and 2 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Bounous et al. (US 3,905,212 (hereinafter Bounous)).

Claims 6 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bounous et al. in view of Craighead (US 1,308,483).

Frand discloses the interconnection of fabric sections by adhesive bonding. The bulges shown in Fig. 2, which are not described in the specification, correspond to the heel and the toe sections, respectively, of an uncompleted hose before the toe opening is closed. The completed hose as shown in Fig. 3 does not have any bulge. Particularly, Frand does not disclose "a bulge section formed in a middle part of said sole section between said first end and said second end of said toe section" and "said bulge section is formed such that it has an arc shape that protrudes vertically downward when the sock is not worn" as recited in claim 1 of the instant application.

Getaz discloses a circular knit hosiery and a method of closing the foot of same. Similar to Frand as discussed above, the finished hose as shown in Fig. 2 does not have any bulge, let alone "a bulge section formed in a middle part of said sole section between said first end and said second end of said toe section" as recited in claim 1 of the instant application. It is noted that

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the portion 11-20-15-16 as shown in Fig. 1 is discarded when finishing the hose (see column 2, lines 46-47). Getaz also does not disclose "said bulge section is formed such that it has an arc shape that protrudes vertically downward when the sock is not worn" as recited in claim 1 of the instant application.

Bounous discloses a stocking which permits exposure of the toes of a patient for inspection and/or treatment purposes, without requiring removal of the stocking from the leg of the wearer. The identifiers 15, 20 in Figs. 1 and 2 of Bounous refer to a widened gusset and a toe inspection opening, respectively. It is not clear how this has anything to do with a bulge in the sense of the present invention. It is further not clear how Fig. 5 of Bounous shows that "said bulge section is formed such that it gradually becomes thinner from a side of a large toe toward a side of a little toe" as recited in claim 2 of the instant application. Fig. 5 of Bounous illustrates the lower foot portion of the stocking as it would appear when being worn by the patient and covering the toes.

Craighead, which has already been discussed in the previous responses, does not make up for the differences between the present invention and Frand, Getaz, and Bounous.

It is accordingly believed to be clear that none of the cited references, whether taken alone or in any combination, either show or suggest the features of claim 1. Claim 1 is, therefore, believed to be patentable over the art and since all of the dependent claims are ultimately dependent on claim 1, they are believed to be patentable as well.

Claim 1 has been modified to even more clearly recite the present invention. More specifically, claim 1 now clearly recites how the bulge section is formed, namely "when forming the bulge section, with the knitting location being held fixed, the knitting needles are gradually decreased, and thereafter, they are gradually increased," in order to facilitate the Examiner's understanding of the present invention. The added limitation is supported by the specification, for example, in paragraph [0020]. An explanation sheet, which has already been submitted with the response of December 14, 2006, is also attached herewith for purpose of illustration.

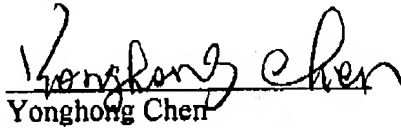
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The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees which may be required at any time during the prosecution of this application without specific authorization, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account Number 50-0951.

Favorable consideration and early issuance of the Notice of Allowance are respectfully requested. Should further issues remain prior to allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the indicated telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,



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